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THE MAN SINGS

STOTT

NB:

THE MAN SINGS

THE MAN SINGS

By

ROSCOE GILMORE STOTT

Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm! a god!

Young's *Night Thoughts*

STEWART & KIDD COMPANY
Publishers Cincinnati

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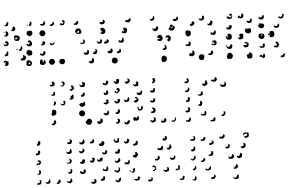
A DEDICATION

FROM A REAL MAN
TO A REAL WIFE
WITH A REAL LOVE



ПЕРЕВІРЕНО
ІНВІТС
МЕДАСВІК

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R. G. S.

Richmond, Kentucky.

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PART I

HIS SONGS OF EMOTION

LIFE at its best——
Vibrant, and full, and strong!
Eager to find its power in the throng;
Mad for the movement of the surging press;
Mad with a strange, new heart of tenderness;
Eager to fight, to climb, to scale the heights above;
Life at its precious best——
Life crowned with Love!

TODAY

LET me carol Today!
The hope and the dream of it,
The sweep and the depth of it,
The wild, weird crash of it,
The sob and the sigh,
The resonant shout,
The clanging of chains,
The maddened engines,
The tireless spinning of its wheels,
Its belts, its gears, its rods,
And its giant spans!

God, I was made for Today!
I am its breath and its food;
I am its slave and its cog,
A cog in its wild, whirring wheel;
I am an atom of wine,
A joyous atom in its full cup;
Today claims me, seizes me,
Thrills me, cheers me, loves me,—
Today sends me forth!

Let me carol Today!
Tho men jeer at my caroling,
Tho fools prate of beflowered Pasts,
Tho the impoverished old
Weep in their places.
Bid me sing with a full throat
In its mammoth market-place,
Or cry its praises in the people's halls,
Or shriek it forth
To the vibrant, echoing winds!
Bid me lift up my voice;
Bid me reflect my passionate joy;
Bid me waken the dead;
Today hath anointed me—
I am a prophet!

Today is Life's herald and reformer;
Today is a ministering spirit,
Whose food is fire,
And whose drink sparkles
With the dye of heroic blood;
Today is Man's great giver,
Who has taught him to give;
Today is Man's exacting task-master,
Who has prodded him to duty;
Today is Man's impartial judge,
Who has taught him justice;
Today is Man's holy example,
His sacred pattern,
His unfailing chart!

Let me carol Today!
Yesterday was a coward who fled,
Who mocked us in fleeing.
Tomorrow is fickle;
Tomorrow is Time's mirage,
Fate's hollow smile,
Death's banquet.
Let me carol Today!
Let me sing of this precious hour!
It is a marvelous and composite Thing,
Made of the sacrifice of patriots,
Of the blood of pure women,
The brain-cells of the inventor,
The dream of the inspired poet,
The song of the ancient plowman,
The despair of the pioneer,
The retreat of the savage,
The sword of the brave,
And the prayer of the pious.

God, I claim Today—
Today only is mine!
Crowd into my knowledge its mystery;
Point out its quality;
Measure for me its sacred worth!

Today's sun lights up the whole world!—
God, bid me carol!

WINDS O' MARCH

WINDS, winds, winds o' March,
Singing winds, stinging winds;
Wooing, cooing,
Sighing, crying,—
Fickle winds o' March!
Now you tell of Winter dreary;
Now you whisper, panting, weary;
Now you beat the leafless larch,
Cooing, crying winds o' March.

Winds, winds, winds o' March,
Waking winds, breaking winds;
Half you fear me,
Half you cheer me,
Fickle winds o' March.
Ah, how like my moods your changing;
Like my nomad-heart your ranging;
Temper not your breath to me—
Shake me with your savage glee.

Winds, winds, winds o' March,
Chilling winds, thrilling winds;
Shy, retreating,
Restless, beating—
Fickle winds o' March.
We have souls that know each other;
We have souls that Law would smother;
Let us off to fright the larch!—
We are comrades, winds o' March.

THE NOMAD

I AM a wanderer; no home I know.
I play at chance with crafty, cunning Fate.
I seek new worlds; I dare not pause and wait;
I see strange vistas and my feet must go.
The present hours drag heavily and slow;
Tomorrow's Land seems decked in regal state;
I yearn and strive with heart disconsolate
To reap a fruitage that I did not sow.

Once in the morning of the Long Ago
I dwelt within the paradisic gate;
A thousand glories did the sun create;
A thousand perfumes did the winds bestow . . .
I am a wanderer; no home I know.
A face turned from me—and I dared not wait.

THE MAN ANIMAL

CALL me criminal, slave, or worm;
Say I have lost my will;
Say that is wrecked which once was firm;
Say that my soul is nil;
Gorge in calumny starving lip;
Batter my frail defense;
Prate of a man who lost his grip;
Say that his god is Sense.

But tonight!—tonight!—tonight!—tonight
The blood in my veins runs mad!
For tonight The Instinct flaunts its might;
And tonight The Wrong appears The Right;
And what if the morrow 's sad?

You, the Puritan,—you, the prude,
Little you know or feel;
Come and over my wreckage brood!
Brood till your spirits reel!
You, the vulture-like, mark your prey
Spurning the moral code;
Heap on his head the Judgment Day—
His, who so poorly sowed.

But tonight!—tonight!—tonight!—tonight
The blood in my veins is fire!
For tonight The Animal is King;
And the Senses, all, their tribute bring;
For The Good and Bad must each his fling
And tomorrow . . . Strike up the lyre!

THE REVOLT

THE damning, the shamming, the living of lies,
The scorpion's nods to her mates,
The preying, the slaying, the frivolous flaying,
The taunting, the flaunting, and Vice at her vaunting—
My Soul how it hates, *how it hates!*

The dancing, the prancing, the loud and the lewd,
The vulture's curled lip as she waits,
The blaming, defaming, the murderous maiming,
The blunting, the stunting, the hounding and hunting—
My Soul how it hates, *how it hates!*

They tingle with joy at Society's fêtes—
But O, for my Soul, how it hates, *how it hates!*

A ROAD SONG

WITH the rein let free,
And a heart of glee,
There's a call for me,
On the Lexington Road;
And I leap astride,
And I spurn to guide,
On my glad, mad ride,
On the Lexington Road.

On the road, on the road,
Let me fly on the road;
Let me fly till I cry
For my joy on the road!

Thru the blue-grass hills,
That a dead heart fills
With a life that thrills,
On the Lexington Road,
Let them hear the beat
Of the hoofs' retreat,
For the hour is sweet,
On the Lexington Road.

On the road, on the road,
Let me swing on the road;
Let me swing till I sing
For my joy on the road!

O'er the trail of Boone,
In a bright, white moon,
Let my dreams make June,
On the Lexington Road;
While the earth's at rest,
Let me go with zest,
On my glad, mad quest,
On the Lexington Road.

On the road, on the road,
Let me fly on the road;
Let me fly till I cry
For my joy on the road!

"LET POETS SING THEIR GRIEF"

LET poets sing their grief; I sob with mine!
No figured phrase can free the weeping heart;
No myth, no lore, no flight—were it sublime—
No subtile trick of speech, no cunning rhyme
Reflects my maddened sorrow . . . God, I fall! . .
I pray in oaths... kind Father, hear my call!

THE INDIAN'S SONG

'MID the autumn leaves I found you;
'Mid the autumn leaves I found you;
With your crimson shawl around you,
And your hair was tossing high.
And the sun went down behind you;
And the sun went down behind you;
You were glad that I did find you—
I could read it in your eye.

With your lips to mine we tarried;
With your lips to mine we tarried;
And the cold, cold Past we buried,
With a triumph of delight.
And I whispered, "Do you love me?"
And I whispered, "Do you love me?"
While the stars shone bright above me,
And we looked—and it was night!

Then in rage they bore you from me;
Then in rage they bore you from me;
And your absence seemed to numb me,
With a pain I cannot tell;
For my poor, poor heart was broken;
For my poor, poor heart was broken—
Ah, you left without a token,
That might rend the awful spell!

But tonight I feel you waiting;
But tonight I feel you waiting;
While our hearts with joy are mating—
Tho the forest lie between;
And I tell the Wind you love me;
And I tell the Wind you love me;
While the stars shine bright above me,
In a beauty rich and sheen.

THE SONG OF SPRING

WITH a ring,
And a swing,
Comes the song of Spring;
Comes the song of Spring when the world is new;
And the heart,
With a start,
Seems to leap apart,
From its low abode to the skies of blue.

With a glee,
That is free,
As the rolling sea—
As the rolling sea and the winds above—
It awakes
And it breaks
Over hills and lakes,
And carols to Youth all its tales of love.

THE GYPSY'S SONG

I

GO, little bird, where the meadows are lying,
Fresh in their verdancy, sweet with their scent;
Go tell my love, while the fair day is dying,
All of the sorrow her absence has lent.

II

Go, little bird, and in feeling her blessing,
Rest calmly down with her arms for thy nest;
Know full content, and in softly addressing,
Tell her how oft would my lips have caressed.

III

Go, little bird, fill her lap high with roses;
Sing her a song with thy minstrelsy clear;
Go tell my love, while she sweetly reposes,
How I am waiting the face that is dear.

THE SONG OF THE STEIN

COME drink, drink, drink,
To the maiden of my choice;
In the music of your laughter
I can hear her regal voice;
Let the stein be lifted higher!
Such a toast could one deny her!
Oh, the maiden of my choice;
Oh, the maiden of my choice!

Come drink, drink, drink,
To a maiden fair and true;
In the glitter of your glances,
I can see her eyes of blue;
Let the stein o'erflow its measure!
Let the night be filled with pleasure!
Oh, a maiden fair and true;
Oh, a maiden fair and true!

Come drink, drink, drink,
To the maiden I adore;
In your mirth, and song, and frolic,
I can dream and live once more!
Let the stein be lifted higher!
Such a toast could one deny her!
Oh, the maiden I adore;
Oh, the maiden I adore!

THE AFTER-SONG

I

IT matters not where'er I go,
I 'm only looking, dear, for you.
The quaint, old paths we used to know
Are covered now by winter's snow;
The winds moan sadly as they blow
A field of gray on skies of blue;
The day moves bitterly and slow;
I find unfaith; I seek the true—
I'm only looking, dear, for you.

II

What feeble joys can life bestow!—
I'm only looking, dear, for you.
The world cares nothing for my woe;
It seeks the Pot of Gold, and lo,
I shudder. As a startled doe,
That leaps toward valleys sweet and new,
To untried lands I fain would go;
Forget the haunts so well we knew—
'Tis lonely looking, dear, for you.

"WERE I A BUD"

WERE I a bud that fain would bloom,
Unto her cheeks I'd trace my way,
And learn the beauty of the day,
While night was hushed in solemn gloom.

Were I a star, I'd bend me low,
Until from out her eyes of blue
I caught the sparkle of the dew,
And found the light I did not know.

Ah, were I Love, I'd long to be
Within the depths of her dear heart;
And by the throbs it did impart,
I'd learn Life's great immensity.

THE SEEKER

COME, Wingèd Years! Whiten my tawny hair;
Brand you my rounded cheeks; furrow with care;
Crumple my stout young frame; crush me with pain;
Curtain my seeing eyes; let Sorrow reign!

For Age alone is wise, wise with the stress of years;
Only the Weak are strong, strong with the flow of tears.
. . . After the Saints I've trod—
Hung'ring, a-thirst—toward God!

To W. R. V.

WHEN THE ORGANIST PLAYS

DREAMER of whispering dreams,
  Gliding close, close to the heart,
Crafts on melodious streams,
  Lingering but to depart;
Dreamer, you bear me away;
  I am the freight of your dreams;
Mine is a mystical day;
  Life—it is more than it seems!

Builder of Harmony's ways,
  Paths to the petulant storm,
Paths to the altar of praise,
  Wrought out of silence to form;
Builder, your paths are for me;
  Godward I leap o'er your lays;
Gladdened, I rush to the sea;
  Hilltops I gain through the haze!

Builder and Dreamer and Guide!—
  Lead where the soul never faints;
Lead where Love's oceans are wide;
  Lead to the feet of the Saints!
I am self-blinded and dumb;
  Earth is a Kingdom of Pride; . . .
Hark!—You are bidding me come!
  Play!—I am borne on the tide!

THE GUIDE'S SONG

I

LAUGH, laugh, laugh, sun in the sky;
Shine, shine, shine, ore in a heap;
Flow, flow, flow, brook in the mead—
But into the forest I go to weep.

II

Grow, grow, grow, grain in the earth;
Fly, fly, fly, sails on the deep;
Ring, ring, ring, bells in the spire—
But into the forest I go to weep.

III

Run, run, run, world in thy course;
Dream, dream, dream, maids in thy sleep;
Horde, horde, horde, fools in thy scorn—
But into the forest I go to weep.

DAY AND NIGHT

I NEVER knew—how could I know?—
The glory of a perfect day,
The dawning and the after-glow,
The blush of roses born in May,
The crystal white of falling snow—
Until her face had turned away!

A MAN TO HIS MATE

SHALL I grow old? Shall I grow passionless?—
I, soul of fire, who quiver at your touch?
Is there an end to loving over-much?
Dear, shall I weary of your close caress?
After the glow has Life some hidden balm
To compensate for Age's heartless calm?

The burnt-out crater sleeps beneath the snows;
The rushing stream is frozen now and chill;
The song of mating bird is hushed and still;
No fragrant blossoms deck the garden-rose.
Am I in nature e'en akin to these?
Dear, shall we lose at length Love's rhapsodies?

Then, be it so, I would but pray to joy
In sacred memories that stir and thrill;
To feel the glory of your clinging still,
Whose subtle charm the years can ne'er destroy;
And, dear, if these be taken in the last,
To love anew within a hallowed Past!

PART II

HIS SONGS OF HIS YOUNG

AND ever the male is head of his herd,
Tho wrought with his pride, his love;
And ever a boast is found in his word
For young that around him move;
And ever the offspring yields to its lord,
Tho mother-love paid the fee;
And ever, within, his heart is stirred
To fight for its purity.

TO THE FIRST-BORN

AFTER the mystery of birth,
  After the mystery of life,
Then to the ecstasy of mirth,
  Then to the elemental strife.

After pre-natal blessedness,
  (There with the God who wrought your soul)
Linked with body comes distress;
  E'en at the Gate of Life—the toll.

Mine is your loss and mine, your gain;
  Mingled with your pure blood is mine.
Parent am I of joy and pain;
  Parent am I of coarse and fine.

Here in this strange, new hour I lift
  Suppliant eyes that thank and plead.
Into my love you come, a-drift;
  Mine but to keep you, while you need.

A LULLABY

LITTLE Heart, Little Heart, resting so tenderly,
Near to the mother-heart, proud with its love;
God keep the harp, that is fashioned so slenderly,
Sweetly attuned to the anthems above!

Little Heart, Little Heart,—ah, for thy purity!
Could I but peer in thy chambers of gold,
Then might I learn thy dear dream of futurity,—
Then might I find some sweet story untold.

THE MAN-CHILD

THE Doctor—watch him smiling!
The Nurse is smiling, too;
And the Woman Who Bore Him
Is the first to adore him—
A Man-Child's come to view!

The World will nod approval,
When news has gone abroad;
And the Father, unheeding
All the pain that was needing,
The Man-Child's blood will laud.

The Church, the State, the Nation
Will hail him from their place;
But the Woman Who Bore Him
(And his brothers before him)
Is Monarch of his Race!

TO HER GIRLHOOD PICTURE

DEAR child of innocence, and hopes, and dreams,
How weak my words; how feeble sounds my praise,
As now I catch the splendor of your gaze,
And reign with you once more in rainbow gleams!
You heard faint music from a far-off Land;
You felt soft flutterings of angel-wings;
And ere your heart had bled with bitter stings,
It learned to love—but could not understand.

Come back again to me, my child of dreams;
Come lift my soul to God's unveilèd themes;
Come teach my heart the song that Nature sings,
When first the lily into being springs! . . .
You call, you call thru yon low-hanging haze;
The garden blooms; and hark—the roundelays!

THE SONG OF THE PARENT

THE queer little shoes that first he wore,
And his little gray cap and kilts;
The red little gloves and the blouse he tore,
And his ball and his broken stilts;
The blocks with the letters old and dim,
And the drum that was once his joy—
O why do we all stand watch for him,
For the Man who was once a Boy!

I ask, does he hear in crowded streets
All the songs that I used to croon?
I ask, does he dream of cool retreats,
Where the fairies dance 'neath the moon?
The Gingerbread Man, has he kept pace?
Would the stories I told bring joy?
O tell, are my arms a sacred place
To the Man who was once a Boy!

AT THE AWAKENING

"O LITTLE babe of Yesterday,
Where are the dew-like tears,
That on your tender eyelids lay,
In those all-vanished years?"
"Ah, they are gone, but newer fears
Of untrod pathways bring new tears."

"O little babe of Yesterday,
Where are the golden dreams
Of fairy-folk and birds at play,
Of phantom ships and streams?"
"They faded, ah, so long ago,
But mine are sweeter joys, I know."

"O little babe of Yesterday,
The whispered prayers you said,
More potent than a priest might say—
Are all your longings fled?"
"Ah, 'tis enough that He who reads
My groping heart can see its needs."

LITTLE QUEEN ESTHER

LITTLE Queen Esther of Story-book Land,
Come and explain, for I can't understand!—
What made Red-Riding-Hood such a good child?
Why was the Wolf, then, so ugly and wild?
Say, are the Fairies real people or not?
Good, old Black Beauty—did he run or trot?
Dear Cinderella's own slipper, they say,
Truly slipt off in a marvelous way;
Yet, why they sought it, I can't understand,
Little Queen Esther of Story-book Land.

Little Queen Esther of Story-book Land,
Some day new heroes will wait your command.
Soon you'll forget all the fairy-book lore;
Sweet little Elsie you'll read of no more;
Jack, who slew giants, and Jack, who loved Jill—
Tell us, O Fates, who their places will fill!
Oh, may the blue of the skies seem more blue,
Fairer the flowers, and friendships more true,
Dearer the joys that are yours to command,
When you awake in the Real-For-Sure Land!

LITTLE BROTHER OF MINE

I

COME to my arms, little brother of mine,
With your dear little sleepy eyes;
For I heard, "Ding-dong!" from the Sandman's gong,
And the gold of the sunset dies.

So leave your toys, little brother of mine,
And away to the Slumber-Shore;
They will all be here, when you waken, dear,
For 'tis then we must play some more.

II

Come to my arms, little brother of mine,
With your dear little weary feet;
They have run in play for a long bright day,
'Mid the flowers and grasses sweet.

A COODLE DOON SONG

I

THE nicht-wind bla's ower cauld, stane wa's,
An' the mither bird cheeps tae three;
The sun's gang low, but the wee things know
They are safe in the ta', ta' tree.

"Coodle doon! Coodle doon!" is the song she'll croon
Tae the wee, bicher bairnies three;
"Coodle doon! Coodle doon!"—wi' a low, sweet tune—
"Coodle doon tae th' he'rt o' me."

II

The nicht-wind bla's ower cauld, stane wa's,
An' the mither oak sings tae three;
For vines are sma' an' she luves them a',
Wi' a luve that is guid an' free.

III

The nicht-wind bla's ower cauld, stane wa's,
An' a mither who nestles three
'Ill kiss each ane, wi' a silent pain,
As they kneel at her luvin' knee.

THE LULLABY-SHIP

THE Ship's aboard for Dreamy Land—
Sail ho, for the dear little Ship we love!
She gaily plows the Sunset Sea,
And all her crew laugh merrily,
For oh, the journey will happy be—
Sail ho, for the dear little Ship we love!

The Ship's far out to Dreamy Land—
Sail ho, for the lights on the Sunset Sea!
They twinkle bright the long night thru,
And shining forth with mission true,
They mark the ports on the Sea of blue—
Sail ho, for the lights on the Sunset Sea!

The Ship's a-nearing Dreamy Land—
Sail ho, for the pilot who steers the Ship!
What need of chart to find the way,
For night is clearer far than day?
To use a compass were idle play—
Sail ho, for the pilot who steers the Ship!

The Ship's at dock in Dreamy Land—
Sail ho, for the dear little Ship we love!
Sail ho, the Sea so still and deep!
Sail ho, the lights that dance and peep!
It matters not that the crew's asleep!—
Sail ho, for the dear little Ship!

LITTLE MAID WITH EYES OF BLUE

LITTLE maid with eyes of blue,
I have waited long for you,
For I love your soft caresses,
As the flower loves the dew,
And my weary heart is beating,
With a rapture sweet and new,
For the birds are trilling welcome,
Little maid with eyes of blue!

Little maid with eyes of blue,
If I knew what Shelley knew,
I would sing a song of greeting,
That would win the heart of you;
Yet, tho all the verse be simple,
You must hear my story, too,
For the sunshine bids you welcome,
Little maid with eyes of blue!

Little maid with eyes of blue,
Could I draw as Reynolds drew,
I would picture all the vista
In a tint of rosy hue;
And the sunrise, and the sunset,
And the glories of my view
Would but seem to bid you welcome,
Little maid with eyes of blue!

TO BABY CHRISTINE

WITH a pledge of love to Baby Christine,
As she laughs and plays in an azure sheen,
Where the fairies dance on a golden shore,
And the rag-dolls talk in a mystic lore;
Where the mud-pies turn to a feast for kings;
Where the Spring-bird comes and his welcome sings;
Where the kilted knights—full a score, I ween,—
Come across the way to Baby Christine.

With a pledge of hope to Baby Christine,
As she learns all joys with a rapture keen;
For a purple pig in her Dreamland waits,
And a candy field with its open gates,
And the heart of all is a castle old
With a king who laughs and his pages bold,
And the lords bow low and proclaim her Queen!—
Ah, the night is sweet to Baby Christine.

With a pledge of faith to Baby Christine,
When she wakes at last to a world unseen;
When the new loves come and the old loves go,
And the heart feels now what it could not know;
When the dreams are changed and the hopes take flight;
When the guiding star is a new, strange Light;
When a mother's heart in its sorrow keen
With a prayer calls back to Baby Christine.

BLINKENTOWN

THERE'S a place I know, when the night-winds blow,
That is fair as a day in May;
And the bells they ring, and the birds they sing
To the children who come from play;
For they come in trains over hills and plains,
From a land that is far, far down;
And there's laughter bright thru the long, still night,
In the Kingdom of Blinkentown.

Oh, it's Blinkentown for the little man,
As he climbs on his mother's knee;
For the train will speed,
Where the lone stars lead,
To a Kingdom of mystery!
Oh, it's Blinkentown, when the sun is low,
And the Sandman has gone his way;
But the train will wait,
By the big Star-Gate,
And be home at the break of day!

All the trains, they say, make a bright array,
With their cushions of crimson plush;
And the engineer ('tis a custom queer)
Never whistles, but whispers, "Hush!"
And the fare they pay in the oddest way,
On this Limited Arm-Chair Road—
'Tis a good-night kiss, and they say that this
Is collected ten times a load!

THE CHILD WITH THE VIOLIN

THE bow glides tenderly across the strings
And half a mother-like caress it seems;
A plaintive lyric into being springs,
From out a close-walled labyrinth of dreams.
The soft eyes gaze into a far-off Land,
A Land of hopes and fears, of tangled ways
That lead to shadow castles where the mountains stand,
Beyond the low-swung valley dense with haze.

What matter it that stronger finger-tips
Call grander themes from out those wooden lips?
What matter it that stronger eyes may see
A clearer vision in Futurity? . . .
'Tis thine, my heart, to learn some sweeter truth—
Some untold story from the song of Youth.

PART III

HIS SONGS OF MEDITATION

FOR the Maker gave of His mind to Man
And Man crawled out of the slime;
Crawled out of the slime and he swiftly ran
And sought the hills for to climb;

And there on the hill he studied his God,
His Plan, His Law, and His Will;
And the Maker smiled and He blest the clod
That found its way to the hill.

BY THE PACIFIC

SEA!—Wonderful, magical Sea!
Sapphire and turpoise are rich in your making;
Warring of Titans resounds in your breaking;
Æons unnumbered the day of your waking;
Hated of those bereft, loved of the free!

Sea!—Petulant, turbulent Sea!
Yours are the moods of a child at its playing;
Mood of the sighing, and mood of the Maying;
Mood of the passionate, mood of the praying—
Ah, what a charm each has cast over me!

Sea! . . . Sea!—
Lord, where was I when its depths were first sounded?
Lord, where was I when its sweep was first bounded?
Thou, only Thou, couldst have shaped it and rounded;
Thou, only Thou, couldst have caused it to be!

(Dedicated to Reginald Wright Kauffman)

DEFENDER OF ALL MARYS

DEFENDER of all Marys. then and now,
Look down in pity on the broken hearts;
Those who in shame can only sobbing bow,
Those who have seen ere now Life's better parts.
The Fates have mocked them and their sins have stained;
The laugh upon their lips holds bitter pain;
How great the cost for all the wisdom gained!
Grant them Thy love, the others give disdain.

Defender of all Marys, they were pure;
In purity they came unto this earth;
One sought in poverty a traitor cure;
One loving Life forgot its sacred worth;
One loved too well; one loved and trusted much;
One built on dreams that faded in a night;
But oh, the gentle magic of the touch
Of Hands that lift and lead the blind to Light!

Defender of all Marys, judge her case;
The Pharisees would stone her where she lies;
She has no rank; each sun brings new disgrace;
Her heart in oaths breathes out its agonies.
Is not His image stamped upon *her* soul?
Was not Thy cross for *Marys* with their sin?
Grant me the sympathy that makes my goal
A fight for lives—a fight where God must win!

"BLOOD OF THY BLOOD AM I"

(To my Mother)

BLOOD of thy blood am I—kind of thy kind;
Heart of thy heart—thine own; mind of thy mind.

Child of thy hope am I—child of thy care;
Child of thy guiding hand; child of thy prayer.

Forth from thyself I came—helpless I clung;
From thee I took my law; from thee, my tongue.

With only love to pay, for my poor fee,
Debtor to God I live—debtor to thee.

TEN YEARS BEFORE

A SIMPLE Jewish maiden sat
  Before her door on woven mat
  And dreamed her childhood dreams.
A dozen children passed her door;
Their arms the palm and laurel bore;
  And half a myth it seems,
They halted there in manner sweet
And gayly cast them at her feet.

A simple Jewish maiden stayed
The panic-feet of those afraid,
  Who fled the courts of law;
And they, who stumbled down the street
With prisoned sight, knew one retreat
  And with her eyes they saw;
And in the night her watch she kept
And with the weeping ones she wept.

A simple Jewish maiden loved
The common folk that round her moved
  Nor scorned them in her pride.
Her little feet were swift to go;
Her little heart, how could it know
  A truth long deified,
That when the King should come—her Son—
He would but do as she had done!

JOSEPH AND MARY

JOSEPH, the simple tradesman, sat nearby,
Awed by his wonder, stilled by sympathy;
Vaguely he mused on what his eyes had seen,
Or pondered slowly what the morn might mean.
Mary slept on—that first blest mother-sleep;
He watched alone; the night was growing deep.
Amazed, he marked new glory flood her face;
Her eyes were closed, but from her lowly place
She called his name, as one who dreams a dream;
And as he came, her face did strangely gleam.
Her arms lay open, and with knowing glance,
He knew he heard her speaking in a trance.

"Look, Joseph, on my Babe—He is a King!
Come near and touch my hand; I hear the ring
Of wondrous anthems bursting from the sky;
I am bewildered and I know not why.
Look, sleeps He well? Ah, Joseph, bear with me
In loving patience, as thou hast for we . . .
Joseph, they sing again! Hear ye the choir?
Their faces shine as with a sacred fire.
They hover near us—O, a mighty throng
Are singing for my Babe His natal-song!
Before His star a thousand stars take flight—
Who placed it there, that wondrous, holy Light? . . .
My joy—dear Joseph, can I bear it all?
My joy!—Ah, see around me fall
The dismal shadows of a distant cross! . . .
My fathers' God, is all this gain or loss?"

And Joseph—for he could not understand—
Knelt by her side and, wond'ring, kissed her hand.

OCTOBER

MONTH of a thousand singing winds,—
Petulant winds that will not rest—
Yours are the days I love the best.
When they are come my spirit finds
Freedom to lose itself in space,
Yearning the winds to keep apace.

Month of a thousand falling leaves,—
Tinted by Nature's master skill—
Long have I gazed across the hill,
Craving the joys my heart receives
When you have come to be with me,
Season of woodland gayety.

Month of a thousand mystic dreams,—
Tinged by the leaves of red and gold—
What is the magic spell you hold?
Is the charm less than what it seems? . . .
Ah, 'tis a secret passing strange—
We are so fickle-fond of change.

A WORKMAN'S PRAYER

LORD, help me at my humble job today!
For, honestly, I'd like to be like Him
Who was a Carpenter an' earned his pay
By workin' hard an' tryin' not to skim.
Most ev'ry fellow tries his best to quit
A little mite before th' whistle blows;
But anything He done, He finished it—
Or so I think th' Bible story goes.

Lord, help me at my humble job today!
I get so sick o' just th' same old thing.
If only I could find some other way—
For stickin'-pow'r 's th' simple prayer I bring.
To hang right to it, like a bull-dog pup,
A-whistlin' like I never cared a blame!
Say, I need You or I can't keep it up,
For without You my job don't go th' same.

Lord, help me at my humble job today!
Th' foreman thinks I'm nothin' but a dog;
An' with that tongue's he's always gettin' gay—
Say, I could lay him flatter 'n a log.
But He—the Carpenter—was meek an' mild,
An' when they cursed He knew just how to wait.
I'm tryin' hard t' be—like Him—Your child.
My notion is—Your walkin'-delegate.

THE BRANDED

THEY pass me ev'ry day with furtive glance
From hollow eyes that once were clear and fair;
Their feet move slowly with a hid despair—
The feet that once tript lightly in the dance.
One paid to Appetite a price too dear;
One shunning Poverty enslaved her soul.
The Past from out their lives the rarest stole;
The Future's clouds hang pitiless and drear.

I would not curse them tho they branded be;
I would remember we are common dust.
He lifted you, O Mary, from your lust,
And it is He who gives you purity . . .
Great Master, guard me lest I cast a stone,
Who should for sordid sins myself atone!

RESIGNATION

O MIGHTY ONE, what matter that I weary,
If Thy strong arm shall deign to bear me up;
What matter that the path I tread be dreary;
What matter that I taste the Bitter Cup!
For Thou wilt keep me by Thy mighty arm;
And Thou wilt stay me in my vain alarm.

O Gentle One, what matter all my sorrow,
If in the darkness I may hear Thy call;
What matter that I fear to face the morrow,
If Thou wilt bend to one so weak and small!
It is enough, it is enough to feel
Thy wondrous touch that ev'ry wound would heal.

O Loving One, what matter that I falter,
And fall beneath the burden of my sin;
What matter that I weep below Thy altar,
For all the kindly deeds that might have been!
For 'twas Thy grace, O Loving One, that paid
The crimson debt my own poor heart had made.

WASHINGTON

LET those who will their pages fill
With fine-phrased lore and story;
Let wise tongues prate the nation's fate
Without this Founder's glory.
With finished honors laud who can;
I sing my song for an honest Man.

Let those who write in figure trite
Pay tribute warm and tender;
Let sages tell what woes befell
Our nation's first defender.
Then show how well his race he ran;
I sing my song for a fighting Man.

Let poets' lays with depth of praise
Delight to boast his daring;
Let men of speech from platform preach
The load his heart was bearing.
Let scholars trace his life's full span;
I sing my song for a human Man.

Today a need where wrong and greed
Have sapped the nation's living
Is men grown strong who dare to long
To be best known for giving.
Today look back where growth began,
And sing with me for a God-made Man.

TOMORROW'S LAND

BEYOND the sunset is Tomorrow's Land,
Whose shores lie gleaming with their golden sand.

A dream—and an awakening—and we
Have sailed unthinking o'er an unknown Sea!

What hopes, what fears, what joys, our hearts demand,
Are waiting—waiting in Tomorrow's Land?

MY FATHER

(Written upon the occasion of his seventieth birthday.)

I

"STILL happy and hopeful at three-score and ten"—
But what of the darkness the pathway led thru?
And what of the charge in the battles of men,
With valor unshaken and loyalty true?
Ah, the marches were long,
And the enemy strong,
But Faith beckoned on to the skies that were blue.

II

"Still happy and hopeful at three-score and ten"—
But what of the task that was laid at his feet?
And what of the labor with word and with pen
To bring from the chaos a structure complete?
Ah, the long, sleepless nights,
With their sputtering lights,
But Hope called to meadows all fragrant and sweet.

III

"Still happy and hopeful at three-score and ten"—
O'er seas that were rolling, thru tempests that blew,
Up steeps that were rocky, past hillock and fen,
With eyes that had looked on Gethsemane's view!
Ah, strong heart, can you see
O'er the brink of Life's lea?—
'Tis Love that leads on toward the skies that are blue.

THE FAR-OFF HILLS

THE hills, the hills, the far-off hills,
That warm the heart ere soon the chills
Of half-remembered pains steal back
Along that silent, rock-strewn track
Of broken years. The hills to me
Are symbols of deep mystery.
A new-born joy awakes and thrills
And softly calls—"The hills! The hills!"

The hills, the hills, the far-off hills! . . .
O subtile charm, that gently stills
This throbbing tempest of my love
And bids me seek the heights above;
The heights where, passionless, my gaze
Beholds the light of perfect days,
Of sunlit fields, of rushing rills,
Of blue-crowned skies—and O, the hills!

The hills, the hills, the far-off hills,
Whose dimness all my being fills
With quaint imaginings; and lo,
The shadow-dreams of Long Ago—
When forests heard the nomad's wail,
A seeker lost beyond the trail—
Demand the heart forget her ills
And dwell with you—my far-off hills!

IN THE CITY LIBRARY

'TWAS one to whom the Muses ne'er had sung;
His sunken eyes scanned listlessly the room;
His hollow cheeks bespoke a certain doom,
As one who sadly to his life has clung.
His ill-shod feet had walked in endless quest;
His ungloved hands he buried in his coat;
Once he had fought, but Penury had smote—
"My fight is lost!" in manner he confessed.

Without, the winds were bleak with winter chill;
Without,—that great Without that held no cheer—
The crowded masses sought their homes so dear,
With eyes that sparkled and with rare good-will.
Perhaps he, too, found joys he could not keep,
For sitting in his chair he fell asleep.

TO AN IMMIGRANT

BACK, alien breed, back to your native shore;
Back, if you bring the Old World to the New!
See! how your kinsmen herd; see, how they bore
The signal honor that may come to you.
Their hands are grimy with the filth they left;
Their souls are blackened with their sordid sin;
Their souls are shrunken—of all Light bereft;
They work old works; a new they ne'er begin.

Come, alien breed, come with a welcome true;
Come, if you bring new hopes, new cheer, new life!
Come, if Old Glory wakes a thrill in you;
Come, be a comrade in the common strife.
Ours is a land of promise richly blest—
Its lakes and streams, its hills and plains possess;
Discard old custom; strive to learn the best;
Take of our blessings and returning, bless.

ATTAINMENT

SCARCE have I risen after victory.
Contentment came, and closely-linked we twain
Would weave fair garlands that they all might see
And mark me for the chiefest of the train
Who sought the prize. She filled my eager glass
With that alluring wine of Self-esteem.
And with Contentment's soft caress, alas!
I fell to dreaming, sated in my dream.

But ne'er with falling have I ceased to climb;
Defeat has goaded and I strove the more.
Who has not lost but knows what joy to win!
Beyond me loomed a sacred height sublime;
It beckoned with a charm unguessed before;
I left my wreck—to hesitate were sin.

TO MADISON CAWEIN

GOD gave you eyes to trace within the rose
Divinity the passers-by ne'er saw.
God took your eyes from off the human flaw,
And pointed where a spotless lily grows.

God gave you ears to catch from out the trees
The joyful carols of the mating-bird—
The simple songs the passers-by ne'er heard;
And in your heart you guard His mysteries.

THE MUCK-RAKER

YOUR nostrils breathe the noisome and the vile;
Your eyes scan eagerly o'er Time's decay;
And blinded by the light of cloudless day,
You grope in darkness that you may defile.

Your fingers pry into the pliant slime;
False witness prattles to your sharpened ear;
You plunder thru the wreckage without fear,
A guilty criminal that gloats in crime.

Forgiven pasts you resurrect in glee;
With fiendish zeal you search for hidden sin;
When men would praise, you glide within the din,
Besmirch the pure, and leaving take your fee.

A cynic's smile is playing o'er your face;
God's image you forget—the Devil's, find;
In grooves of mire you prod your spoiler's mind
To track, hound-like, your victim to his place.

It is not yours nor mine to wreck and build;
You wreck for gold—the builder's pay is more;
And he who lets the sunshine thru the door
Has parted gloom and his best task fulfilled.

A SINGING HEART

O FOR a singing heart within my breast,
That in the stifled, sordid grind of all
Life's commonplace, where petty cares hold thrall,
My soul may throb with melody serene and blest;
Or bursting into some full chant of Hope,
Its notes may break the stillness of the night
For some, who weeping in their sorry plight,
With all their bitter griefs but poorly cope.

Be mine a singing heart that thrills and cheers;
That wakes a counter melody; that lifts
To skyward from the murky passion-drifts;
That lights the eye self-blinded by its tears.
Be mine a singing heart, whose anthem floats
With God's pure sunshine woven thru its notes.

THE RETURN OF SORROW

UPON the face Despair had cast a gloom;
The melancholy eyes were moist and red;
A pallor smote the cheeks of perfect bloom;
And from the lips I thot this message sped:

"I leapt into the glow of flurried flame;
I reveled in the music and the mirth;
But back from Mem'ry's heart My Sorrow came,—
And now I 'm lying prostrate on the earth!"

SEPTEMBER

SUMMER'S cup is brimming over,
Overflows with scent of clover,
And the perfume of the rose,
And the violet that grows,
When the south wind gently blows—
Ah, that flying, sighing lover!
Summer bids us stay—remember;
But we heed not; 'tis September.

Summer weeps with tender pleading,
Weeps with certain pace receding;
And the Fall-rains come and go,
With a sorrow half we know,
And beyond us gleams the snow,
Where a crystal path is leading.
Summer's charm has lost its power—
Autumn waits in tinted bower.

Sun-kissed Summer tarries sadly—
Once we romped with her how gladly!
Now she lives within her Past,
With the joys that could not last.
See, she shivers in the blast,
While the cool winds frolic madly!
Summer pleads, "O stay—remember!"
But we heed not; 'tis September.

THE PRAYER OF THE TOILERS

GREAT God, according to Your own good plan,
The luxuries of wealth we have not known;
The fields of others we have humbly sown;
The ships of others it was ours to man.
He is a clog who of his labor lends;
Nor is it easy to be true and brave;
And yet a comfort in the strife You gave—
We have had friends.

Great God, You made us all from common clay,
But some were fashioned in a coarser mold;
We cannot read Life's riddles manifold;
We dare not venture on an untried way.
Another plans; we move at his behest—
Ah, to be trained with ready wit and skill!
Yet after day's long task—it was Your will—
We have had rest.

Great God, how small the circle of our lives!
We make no laws; we rule no sect or creed;
'Tis only ours to march where others lead;
His word is naught who of his labor gives.
And yet content we tread the journey thru,
Nor covet lacking wisdom, wealth, or pow'r;
For in the struggle of the darkest hour,
We have had You.

THE BRAGGART

"I do not care for scorn or glory,
Whether come for praise or blame;
For I lived before Earth's slender story,
And it knew not when I came.

"I do not care for peace or power,
For I dwell apart from men.
In my joy I race the blinding shower,
And in wrath race back again.

"I do not care for good or evil,
Yea, I slay them both alike.
And I bend not to a god or devil,
And they cannot foil my strike.

"They have sought to read my nomenclature
On a field of pitch-black cloud;
They have sought to bind by law of nature,
Till my voice grew harsh and loud.

"Yet care I not for hell or heaven,
And I will not yield to man,
Till the years have changed to æons seven,
And I lift—self-moved—the ban!"

He slept and dreamed as king he reigned;
He waked a vassal—fettered, chained!

HAIL TO THE LIVING ONES

HAIL to the living ones!
The rest have gone to sleep.

Oh, they fought big-souled,
And they fought true-mold,
  For the Cause, tho it win or fail;
And they marched o'er dead,
And they knew the dread,
  Of the heart-broken prison wail.

There was want and thirst,
Where the volley burst,
  Thru a path of a blood-red hue;
There was pain and woe,
That we cannot know,
  But the heart that was tried stayed true.

They are not all here,
For a nameless bier
  Is the mark on the field they fought;
And the Death-germ came,
In the wreath of fame—
  For a crown must be dearly bought.

But the living ones
Be the honored sons!
  For the dead ever live in song;
And the worn blue coat
Is a warning note,
  That the Taps will not wait for long!

Hail to the living ones!—
The rest have gone to sleep.

"MASTER, I FREE THEE"

GREAT Master, how Thy servants shackle Thee!
I—I have prisoned Thee with bonds unbroke;
I who am shrinking low beneath a cloak
Of venomed piety that stifles me.
My unfaith chained the vigor of Thy arm;
My unfaith closed Thy ears to human cries;
My unfaith bound Thy wide, all-seeing eyes;—
O clownish prayers that reckoned not their harm!

Master, I free Thee! Run, great Sun, Thy course;
Shine with rare mercy thru unfurrowed sod;
Shine where a worm that little knew its God
Bounded Thy orbit with its puny force.
Master, I free Thee—take, great King, Thy right;
I, Thy poor jester, give Thee back Thy might.

A CHRISTMAS WISH

I COULD not ask for more than this—
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day—
That half the sweetness of the kiss,
That first He gave where Mary lay,
Might journey thru the years to me,
And turn my heart to purity.

I could not long for more than this—
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day—
That half the light of stainless bliss
In His first smile, a Babe at play,
Might shine thru all that long, still night,
And guide my wayward feet aright.

SILENCES

LORD, I have learned Thee by Thy silences,
Beyond man's definition or his creed;
I need no Word of sacred memories,
Nor Law in stone, nor Legend is my need.

For Thee I found in silence of the night;
In silent joy that knew no word's relief;
In silent love that stifled with its might;
And in those agonies of silent grief.

TO THE CITY

I HAVE looked on your good and your bad;
I have taken your food and your drink;
And your wild, free mood has my heart pursued,
For your thots I was eager to think.
But you brazenly sat in your pride,
And the kinship I sought was denied.

I have worshipt your idols of gold;
I have knelt at your altars to Mirth;
And your lure of light with its subtile might
Has ensnared and has held me to earth.
But you heeded no sound of my name,
For your own were the children of fame.

I have wondered with awe at your sweep,
At your millions, your marts, and your men;
I have pitied your poor who must weep;
I have entered your shrine and your den.
But the Stranger is less than your beast;
For your own—lo, I smell it—a feast!

THE STRONG WOMAN

(To M. M. C.)

SOMEHOW her very delicacy was strength,
With which she met the tempest-tide of Life;—
Frail craft, that did not fear the journey's length
Nor dread the billows' strife.

Somehow her gentle tenderness was pow'r,
With which she did the larger task alone;—
Frail toiler, fashioned for the leisure hour,
A sturdy workman grown.

Somehow her unfeigned purity was rule,
With which she wrought in meek yet regal mien;—
Frail monarch, acting as her Maker's tool—
Unknown, uncrowned, unseen!

LIFE

TO work with zeal and then to stop and play;
To fight unflinching, with a time to pray;
To win glad victories, and oft to fail;
To join the care-free laughter—and the wail;
To hear approval that will change to scorn;
To mend the heart your thotless word has torn;
To love and hate, to curse and to kiss—
And this is Life, and what a Life is this!

L'ENVOI

SAY not that Night brings shadows—Night brings stars,
And with the stars come hope and peace and rest.
Night holds the hours the wearied soul loves best.
Night is the goal that ends the day's long quest,
Whate'er its scars.

At Morn and Noon great thots are sown—at Night we reap
A blessed fruitage, mellowed by the years.
Night's faithful hand so gently dries the tears.
Night stills the heart that flutters with its fears—
And then—to sleep!

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